

35. U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-19 stand rejected under §103(a) as being obvious over Reilly (U.S. Patent No. 6427164) in view of Goodhand (U.S. Patent No. 5923848).

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections. Generally, claimed embodiments address a problem of identifying when a distribution list has an erroneous addressee, and removal of the erroneous addressee to avoid error messages when messages are subsequently addressed to the distribution list. This is not taught by Reilly. Instead Reilly teaches using a "forwarding listserver" (col. 3 line 17, col. 8 line 19) which is responsible for providing a "new address" for an out of date e-mail address (col. 3 line 18, col. 8 lines 23-30). In particular, Reilly requires that the "forwarding listserver" to be known to "some or all participants in the electronic mail process" (col. 3 lines 13-14).

Such use of a "forwarding listserver" is not what is claimed, and in particular, and as noted by the Action, the Reilly "forwarding listserver" fails to address claim 1's recited "deleting the first member from the distribution list" in response to "receiving ... an error message." This limitation of Reilly is not cured through combination with Goodhand.

The Action states Goodhand at col. 13, lines 40-54 "disclose deleting the first member from the distribution list **so that a subsequent sending to the distribution list avoids corresponding subsequent error messages.**" Applicant respectfully submits this is an incorrect interpretation of Goodhand. The recited result in claim 1 of avoiding subsequent error messages is not taught or suggested by Goodhand. While the Goodhand address book identified by the Action allows for modification (col. 13 line 52) of the address book, there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited portion of Goodhand of modifying the address book to avoid error messages.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for directing attention to Reilly col. 3 lines 3-10. As discussed above, neither Reilly nor Goodhand teach or suggest, either individually or in combination, distribution list modification in order to avoid subsequent error messages as recited. Consequently, even if Goodhand and Reilly are combined as suggested, this combination fails to suggest the recited limitations of claim 1.

CONCLUSION

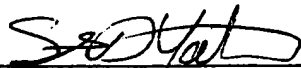
Independent claims 8, 11, and 17 each contain limitations corresponding to claim 1 deleting an invalid list member to avoid subsequent error messages. Therefore claims 8, 11, and 17 are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above for claim 1.

Based on the foregoing, it is submitted that that all active claims are presently in condition for allowance, and their passage to issuance is respectfully solicited.

The Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned by telephone to discuss the references and Applicant's response to the Action in order to further the examination of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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